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RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0613

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 000692

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/28/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [BF](#) [CU](#)  
SUBJECT: GCOB TO NAME NEW AMBASSADOR TO CUBA

Classified By: Charge Zuniga-Brown for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) The director of the Department of Immigration, Vernon Burrows, told PolChief September 23 that he was preparing to take up an assignment as ambassador in Havana soon, possibly by the end of next month. There has been no official announcement of any impending change, though an opposition-affiliated web-site has reported it. By sending one of its most senior immigration officials to Havana, the appointment may signal the GCOB's emphasis on addressing illegal migration. Cuba is the one of the largest source countries for illegal migration to The Bahamas.

12. (U) The veteran Mr. Burrows joined the Immigration Department in 1965 as a sixteen-year old clerk, became an officer in 1968, Superintendent in 1988, Deputy Director in 1998, and director in 1999. Mr. Burrows, past dealings with Cuban officials on thorny repatriation issues, including several official visits to the island during his career, may recommend him for the job. He is also well known, and largely well-regarded, among international NGOs dealing with human trafficking and migration management issues. He has been a frequent GCOB representative at international conferences and events dealing with migration-related issues.

13. (C) Comment: The large number of Cuban migrants in The Bahamas provides a good explanation for the immigration director's reassignment as ambassador to Havana. Ensuring that The Bahamas keeps its ability to repatriate Cubans directly to Cuba will likely be his primary area of focus. While Burrows is well-disposed toward the United States, it is unlikely that he will be more than just a passive, private supporter of human rights or other U.S. goals in Cuba. End comment.  
ZUNIGA-BROWN